Stefan the Serb in Moldavian Manuscripts

ANNE E. PENNINGTON

SOME twelve years ago, after centuries of oblivion, the name and work of an early Serbian composer—the domestikos Kyr Stefan the Serb—were brought to light by the Serbian musicologist D. I. Stefanović. He transcribed, published and recorded two compositions by Stefan: the Cherubic hymn from the Liturgy of the Presanctified: Нинꙗ сили in mode 2 plagal, and the koinonikon from the same service: Γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε in mode 1. Both works come from MS 93 of the Belgrade National Library, one of the manuscripts which was destroyed during the last war, but from which a number of photographs survived. The manuscript is thought to have dated from about 1459; the two compositions were on fols. 297v–298.[1]

Stefanović found that both compositions had more than one text. In the Cherubic hymn the Greek: Νῦν αἱ δυνάμεις is written below the Serbian Church Slavonic; in the koinonikon the Serbian Church Slavonic: Бькꙋсите н видите is written below the Greek. Here, barely visible in the photograph, Stefanović was able to decipher a third text: Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον, the normal Sunday koinonikon, added after the bilingual one, and clearly to be sung to the same melody.

Stefan's koinonikon in mode 1, with the text: Γεύσασθε was found also in a manuscript from the end of the 15th century: MS 928 in the National Library, Athens, which was written, probably in the monastery of Matejče, Skopska Crna Gora, by another Serbian composer, the monk Isaiah. Here, on fol. 140v, the koinonikon bears only the attribution: τ8 Στεφανου, but Stefanović, by a comparison of his transcription of this work with that of MS Belgrade 93, was able to prove that the setting is the same, and that the work of Stefan therefore had some lasting popularity.[2]

About Kyr Stefan, as about most of the early composers of church chant, little is known. The attribution in MS Belgrade 93, fol. 297v: Твореніе доместика квp Стефана Сръбина (sic),[3] apparently prompted Dj. Sp. Radojčić to identify him with the 'Stefan domestik u gradu Smederevu', who in the mid-15th century copied books for the despot Lazar at the latter's court.[4] This remains speculative since, although one meaning of *domestik* is 'precentor, choir leader', there is no proof that

[1] See D. I. Stefanović, 'Izgoreli neumski rukopis br. 93 Beogradske Narodne Biblioteke' (*Bibliotekar*, XIII no. 5, Belgrade, 1961, pp. 378–84, with plates).

[2] See D. I. Stefanović, 'The Serbian Chant from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries' (*Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis*, I, Bydgoszcz, 1966, pp. 140–63). He describes the manuscript, following the Athens catalogue, as 16th century (p. 145). On the basis of the watermarks, N. G. Wilson would date it to the end of the 15th century.

[3] The transcription is made from the plates in *Bibliotekar*, XIII no. 5 cited above. Here and in all transcriptions from MSS, superscripts will be in italics, and normal abbreviations will not be expanded.

[4] See Dj. Sp. Radojčić, *Književna Zbivanja i Stvaranja kod Srba u Srednjem Veku i u Tursko Doba*, Matica Srpska, Novi Sad, 1967, pp. 248–9.

Stefan of Smederevo was a composer as well as a scribe, even if he was a singer. The lack of notated Serbian manuscripts earlier than the mid-15th century so far prevents any certainty on the period when Stefan lived. But it is now possible to assert with some confidence that his work survived into the mid-16th century and was known outside Serbia.

With the advance of the Ottoman invasion in the 14th century, bearers of Byzantine culture tended to migrate north and west. The 15th century in Wallachia and the 16th in Moldavia saw an extraordinary flowering of Christian art and architecture. Important schools of painting, embroidery and calligraphy arose, especially in Moldavia, and in the monastery of Putna, founded by Stefan the Great in 1466, there flourished, for about a hundred years, a school of church music, which has left a significant corpus of material.

So far eight notated manuscripts have been identified as coming from 16th-century Putna. They form seven akolouthiai, with texts, in Greek, or in Greek and Slavonic, mainly for Vespers and the Liturgy. Four of these are of particular interest here, since they contain a composition by Stefan the Serb, previously overlooked.

The eight Putna manuscripts are described in greater detail elsewhere;[5] here only their dates and whereabouts will be given:

1. MS Ščukin 350 in the State Historical Museum (GIM), Moscow. It contains 158 folios, and was written in or about 1511, by the monk Evstatie, *demesnik* and *protopsalt* (precentor and leader of the right-hand choir) of Putna, who signs his name several times and claims to be the composer of a number of the settings in his book.

2. MS 13.3.16 in the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (BAN), Leningrad. It consists of fourteen folios, which belong to MS Ščukin 350.

3. MS 56/576 in the Library of the monastery of Putna, fols. 1–84. It may be dated to the beginning of the 16th century.

4. MS 1.26 in the Central Library in Iaşi. It consists of 235 folios. On fol. 126 the scribe signs his name in Slavonic: ер⟨о⟩мнна͟х Андоніе та͟х и пѣвець въ Пꙋтенском ⟨м͞⟩внастирѣ, and gives the date 1545.

5. MS 816 in the Library of the Ecclesiastical Museum, Sofia. It contains 234 folios; both beginning and end are missing. It may be dated, from its watermarks and similarity to MS Iaşi 1.26, to the middle of the 16th century.

6. MS 283 in the Library of the Rumanian Academy of Sciences in Bucharest. It consists of 240 folios. The watermarks are difficult to identify, but again a date around 1550 seems very probable.

7. MS 284 in the Library of the Rumanian Academy of Sciences, Bucharest. Only 97 folios remain from a much larger book; both beginning and end are missing. The watermarks indicate the mid-16th century, or a little later.

8. MS 52 in the Library of the monastery of Dragomirna. Only 140 folios

[5] See especially: Diac. G. Panţiru, 'Şcoala muzicală de la Putna' (*Studii de muzicologie*, VI, Bucharest, 1970, pp. 31–67); A. E. Pennington, 'Seven akolouthiai from Putna' (*Studies in Eastern Chant* IV (forthcoming); further bibliography there also).

remain from what was evidently a larger book. Probably also mid-16th century.

All seven akolouthiai share to a large extent the same repertory, both of texts and of composers. Most of the composers are Greeks, familiar from other anthologies.[6] Apparently unique, as a Slavonic composer, is Stefan the Serb, to whom is attributed only one composition, the Sunday koinonikon in mode 3 plagal. His name appears in the four manuscripts in slightly different forms, but the attribution cannot be doubted. The forms are:

> MS Putna 56/576 fol. 35v: τȣ Στέφαυ σρπιυα.
> MS Iaşi 1.26 fol. 107v: τȣ Στέφαυ σρ́πίυα.
> MS Sofia 816 fol. 97v: τȣ Στεφαυ σερπίυα.
> MS Bucharest 283 fol. 105: σέρπιυα.

There should probably be no hesitation in identifying this Stefan the Serb with the domestik Stefan the Serb of MS Belgrade 93. The interval of time is surely too small for two different composers with the same ethnic attribution to be accepted in the repertories. It will be interesting to see whether musical analysis of this mode 3 plagal setting for the Sunday koinonikon reveals similarities with the style of the mode 2 plagal setting of the cherubic hymn and the mode 1 setting of the koinonikon: Γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε

The form of Stefan's name in the Putna manuscripts calls for comment. It should be noted that while names of feast days are regularly written in Slavonic in these akolouthiai, the names of composers are in Greek. For Stefan too the scribes have used the Greek alphabet, but not the Greek form of the ethnic name, which would be τοῦ Σέρβου, cf. in MS Athens 928, fol. 36: Ησαΐȣ τοῦ Σέρβου. The usual Serbian written form is with a *jer*, cf. in MS Athens 928, fol. 93: Николе Сръбина; MS Belgrade 93, fol. 287v: Стефана Сръбина. In the hybrid form of Putna, the scribes are attempting to convey with Greek letters a form familiar not to their eye, but to their ear: neither Rumanian nor Greek has a vocalic -*r*-, so in two cases a vowel is inserted. It should be emphasised that this vowel is not the expected -*a*- of Serbian Church Slavonic pronunciation,[7] but -*e*-, a less open sound, presumably an attempt to approximate to the Serbian vernacular pronunciation. This is suggested also by the more successful forms without an extra vowel. The scribes have used Greek π for Slavonic б, which again indicates oral transmission: Greek /p/ is phonetically closer to Slavonic /b/ than is any other Greek phoneme. The Greek scribe of the Oxford MS E. D. Clarke 14, transcribing with Greek letters a Slavonic text he had apparently heard sung, found the same solution to the problem of Slavonic /b/ three times on fol. 409v, although he preferred the Modern Greek digraph μπ.[8]

[6] See M. Velimirović, 'Byzantine Composers in MS Athens 2406', *Studies presented to Egon Wellesz*, Oxford, 1966, pp. 7–18.
[7] See P. Djordjić, *Istorija srpske ćirilice*, Belgrade, 1971, pp. 204–20.
[8] See A. E. Pennington, 'A Polychronion in Honour of John Alexander of Moldavia' (*Slavonic and East European Review*, L, London, January 1972, pp. 90–9).

Remarkable also in the attribution to Stefan is the combination of end-ings. The lack of case ending on Stefan is expected, since the final -*n* is a superscript in all three cases. S(e)rpina, though, shows the Slavonic genitive form, combining uneasily with the Greek genitive article *tou*. This odd juxtaposition is probably to be explained simply as a Rumanian feature. In Rumanian, the genitive-dative morph of masculine and neuter substantives is *lui*; when used with proper names, it is preposed, and the name itself does not decline, e.g. cronica lui Macarie, în timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare. The Slavonic attribution *Stefana Srbina*, probably transmitted orally, was accepted as it was by the Rumanian chanters and scribes, but without sufficient comprehension to translate it into Greek or to modify it; they merely added *tou*, their formula of attribution, to *Stefana Srbina*, the invariable name-form.

It is striking that no such grammatical anomalies are found with familiar Greek composers. The correct endings are almost invariably used, e.g. **τȣ Λαμπαδαρίȣ** Sofia 816, fol. 95, **τȣ Φοκὰ** *ibid.*, fol. 92v, **τȣ μόναχ 'Αγαθώνος** Iaşi 1.26 fol. 68, **τȣ Χρεισαφει** *ibid.*, fol. 110v, **τȣ Μοσχιάνȣ** Putna 56, fol. 27v, **τȣ Ρεδεστίνȣ** Bucharest 283, fol. 79v. The only clear grammatical mistake made with a Greek name is: **τȣ Γλυκεȣ**, Putna 56, fol. 26v, similarly Sofia 816, fol. 58, but this is an extension of the most common Greek genitive morph: a mistake often made by Greeks too. The spelling of these names is erratic, but on the whole consistently reflects Greek pronunciation, while ignoring Greek orthographical conventions.[9] Even Андоніе (Iaşi 1.26 fol. 126) and **τȣ Κλὴκέως** (Bucharest 283, fol. 56) represent an effort—if a misguided one—to approximate to Greek pro-nunciation. Stress marks, on the other hand, are haphazard or even decorative.[10]

This combination of inconsistent spelling with faithful reflection of pronunciation (and therefore form), again suggests oral transmission: the Rumanian monks would have learnt the settings, with their attribution, in a Greek or Slavonic-speaking milieu, and brought them back to their monastery faithfully, in a form which was orally correct. Undoubtedly, Greek notated manuscripts existed in Putna, with the names in the correct forms—MS Putna 56, fols. 85–160 is one such—but the Putna scribes did not copy from them, or their mistakes would have been different.[11]

The formulaic nature of the correctly declined attributions to Greek composers becomes clear when they are compared with the attributions to those who are apparently Rumanian composers.

The clearest example is with the attributions to the monk Evstatie, protopsalt of the monastery in the early part of the century, whose

---

[9] The correct forms of these seven composers would be: τοῦ Λαμπαδαρίου, τοῦ Φωκᾶ, τοῦ μοναχοῦ 'Αγάθωνος, τοῦ Χρυσάφη, τοῦ Μοσχιανοῦ, τοῦ Ραιδεσ-τινοῦ, τοῦ Γλνκέος.

[10] The problem of stress on proper names must have been particularly acute for the Rumanians, using two foreign languages, one of which they must have heard in several recensions. Even in the more stable linguistic situation of Russia, the influence of Greek could be unsettling. See B. A. Uspensky, *Iz istorii russkikh kanonicheskikh imyon*, Moscow University, 1969, especially pp. 183–4.

[11] See also P. P. Panaitescu, 'Manuscrisele Slave ale Bibliotecii Academiei' (*Studii şi cercetări de documentare şi bibliologie*, 2–3, Bucharest, 1967, pp. 265–70).

Rumanian provenance cannot be doubted.[12] A large number of composi-
tions are attributed to him, and his name appears in all the Putna akolou-
thiai, but although his name is spelt **Εὐστατϊε, Εβστατϊε** or in cyrillic
Εvстатiе, it is never declined—the regular form of attribution is **τ8 μοναχ**
Ευστατιε (Sofia 816 fol. 52, Iaşi 1, 26 fol. 81 bis, Putna 56 fol. 44v etc.).
The true Greek form: **τοῦ μοναχοῦ Εὐσταθίου** is not found—that is,
the scribes, who in **τ8 'Ανθημ8** (Iaşi 1-26 fol. 75) etc., use *theta* and
a genitive in *-ou* for a Greek composer, ignore these non-Rumanian
features for their own.

Two other non-declining names may be suspected of belonging to
local composers. The first is a certain Kyr Georgie, who is named only
once: **κυρ Γεώργιε** (Putna 56 fol. 60). Here the scribe gives just the name
without *tou*; however, if this were Greek, it would be the vocative case: a
Rumanian nominative is far more probable.

The other is an even more intriguing figure, found only in MS Bucharest
283, fol. 69: **τ8 Θεωδοσιε ζοτικα.** The first name, in spite of the *theta*, looks,
by its ending, like a Rumanian form, while the second name could be a
fossilised Slavonic genitive. The non-Greek impression is strengthened by
the use of cyrillic *-t-* in the second name; indeed, as the other letters are not
very distinctive, the whole word may be cyrillic. This is the only composer's
name, apart from Evstatie's, which uses cyrillic *-t-* in any of the manu-
scripts.

There is only one Rumanian composer whose name appears with a
Greek ending: Dometian the Vlach. He is cited four times: Dragomirna
52 fol. 23: **τ8 Δομεντιαν8 τ8 Βλαχ**; Iaşi 1.26 fol. 127: **τ8 Δεμεντιαν τ8**
Βλαχ8; Bucharest 283 fol. 111: **τ8 Δεμέτιαν. τ8 Βλαχ**; Sofia 816 fol. 103:
τ8 Δεμετίαν. τ8 Βλαχ.

These forms possibly suggest that Dometian was neither so contemporary
nor so local as the preceding three composers. A man does not acquire an
ethnic attribute unless he is known amongst foreigners, and while it is true
that a Moldavian might specify a man's Wallachian origin, the form of the
first name and its declension indicate that Dometian was given his ethnic
nickname further afield.

This Christian name seems to be particularly subject to corruptions: the
Greek is *Δομιτιανὸς*, modern Rumanian and Bulgarian have Dometian,
Serbian Domentijan, Russian Church Slavonic (according to Pamva
Berynda) in the 17th century had Dometian, Domitian and Dometij;[13] in
modern Russian the popular form is Dementij, while the calendar dis-
tinguishes Dementian (a Georgian saint) (15 April), Dometian (10 Janu-
ary) and Dometij (7 August). The confusion is well illustrated by Martinov
in his *Annus Ecclesiasticus*: for 7 August the heading is 'S. Dometii seu
Dementii' and Martinov mentions that Dometian(us) is the Trnovo form
of this; under 10 January, the 'Domitian(us) episcop(us) Melitinae' of the
heading becomes 'Dometian' in most of the references.[14] Confusion of

[12] See R. Pava, 'Cartea de cîntece a lui Evstatie de la Putna' (*Studii şi materiale de istorie
medie*, V, Bucharest, 1962, pp. 335–47).
[13] See V. V. Nimčuk (ed.) *Leksykon Slovenoroskyj Pamvy Beryndy*, Kiev, 1961, p. 201.
[14] I. Martinov, *Annus Ecclesiasticus Graeco-Slavicus*, Brussels, 1963, pp. 195, 36.

Greek unstressed -*i*- with Slavonic -*e*-, assimilation of -*o*- to an -*e*- in the following syllable and the acquisition of a parasitic -*n*- are all familiar features.[15] But surely the Putna scribes would not have used such a variety of forms—which involve different pronunciation—for a contemporary local monk?

These variant forms, together with the ethnic attribute and the Greek genitive form, probably suggest that Dometian was a more remote figure than Evstatie; that he lived perhaps in the preceding century, and therefore acquired his musical education outside the Rumanian lands, presumably amongst Greeks, since his name is attached to his composition in a Greek form. As a set formulaic attribution, his name in the Greek form would be reimported to the Rumanian lands, with a range of variants in his first name similar to that of his saint.

It is not possible to pursue this speculation further with any safety, since links between the Rumanian lands and other Orthodox centres were frequent. A well known example of Wallachians abroad is the invasion of the monastery of Koutloumousi by Wallachian monks in the late 14th and 15th centuries. Koutloumousi was certainly a multi-racial and presumably a multi-lingual community: the 1369 Act of John Vladislav speaks, if with a certain pan-Slav confusion, of 'Σέρβοι καὶ βούλγαροι δηλαδὴ 'Ρώς' as well as Iberians (that is, Georgians).[16] Koutloumousi in the 14th or 15th century would have been the type of cultural melting-pot where a Wallachian monk's composition could have acquired the tag 'τȢ ΔομεντιανȢ τȢ ΒλαχȢ' with its variants.

No evidence, however, is available to substantiate this sort of speculation. So far, Dometian is known only for this one composition, which has as yet been found only in the four Putna manuscripts from the mid-16th century. It is to be hoped that, as Stefanović's transcriptions of Stefan's compositions enabled his identification in later manuscripts, so Panţiru's transcription of Dometian's may lead to his identification in earlier ones, and that gradually a fuller picture of the creative activities of the Rumanian monks of this period may be built up.[17]

[15] For the last two, see B. O. Unbegaun, *Russian Surnames*, Oxford, 1972, p. 65.

[16] See P. Lemerle (ed.), *Actes de Kutlumus. Archives de l'Athos*, II, Paris, 1946, pp. 102–5, Act No. 26.

[17] See Panţiru, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–6.

Folios 97v–98v from MS 816 from the library of the Ecclesiastical Museum, Sofia. The name, Stefan Serpina, is just visible above the folio number, 97v.

98.

985